

High School Graduation Cohort Status Profile Report Frequently Asked Questions

The following are frequently asked questions and answers related to the NJ SMART High School Graduation Cohort Status Profile Report.

1. Question: Are special education students who do not graduate until they age out of the system at age 21 included in my graduation cohort?

Answer: Like any other high school student, students receiving Special Education services will be assigned to a graduation cohort and figure into graduation rate calculations- including those who continue until they age out of the system. As is the case for any student continuing beyond the Cohort's expected graduation year, they will count as a 'non-graduate' in the 4-year graduation rate calculation. The NJ DOE is provided with subgroup information such that they will be able to see what percentages of your continuing students are Special Education classified. Reference: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/hsgrguidance.pdf>

2. Question: What happens if a student is in ninth grade in 2007 (graduation cohort of 2011) and fails, leading them to repeat the grade? Do those students remain in 2011 cohort, or do they move to 2012 cohort?

Answer: In that case, the students remain in the 2011 Cohort. Once assigned a cohort, students remain in that cohort until they graduate.

3. Question: If students are assigned a Cohort Year in ninth grade, then what happens if students transfer into tenth grade from out-of-state? Will they be included in a cohort?

Answer: Yes, those students will be assigned to whatever cohort they would have joined in 9th grade. For example, if a student enters the NJ SMART system as a 10th grader in October of 2008, that student would be assigned to the 2011 Cohort.

4. Question: My district inactivated a student as a dropout but then the student was activated in another district. Will this student still count as a "Dropout" for my district in graduation rate calculations?

Answer: No, NJ SMART will recognize the student as active in a new district and they will no longer be considered a dropout in graduation calculations.

5. Question: What if students transfer out of state? There will be no other district to re-activate their SID. Will the student be considered a Transfer Out – Unverified and count against our graduation rate?

Answer: A transfer to an out-of-state school will count as "Excluded from Cohort" and the student will be subtracted from your school's cohort count. (i.e., your district is no longer

responsible for the student with respect to this calculation). The NJ DOE will be implementing an audit process to verify these transfers.

6. Question: What about students who graduate early (three years instead of four)? How are they accounted for?

Answer: As long as you exit students with a School Exit Withdrawal Code of "L", they will be counted as graduates for their cohort (i.e., the cohort they were assigned in 9th grade).

7. Question: What happens when students are retained in a different district (and become Off-Track Continuing for the 4-year graduation rate) and then transfer into our school. Will they count against our graduation rate even though they were not in our district when they went off track?

Answer: Yes, they will count as off-track in your district. Graduation cohort statuses are based on a four-year expected timeline of graduation for each student, and are updated based on student progress through grade levels. On-Track / Off-Track Continuing statuses are not affected by transferring to a new school.

8. Question: How do we account for students who are staying for post-graduate work?

Answer: In the case that students fulfill their requirement to graduate within four years but will remain in high school to continue their studies, these students should be exited as graduates ("L") at the appropriate time and then re-uploaded to SID Management in the subsequent school year as an Active student. During the next State Submission, these students would be assigned a Grade Level of "PG" (postgraduate). (Please note that students who are continuing as postgraduates are not publicly funded.)

9. Question: How will errors or sync records submitted to the Official State Submission affect our graduation rate?

Answer: The cohort statuses of active students will be updated based on the records that you successfully submit to state submission. If you "Release with Errors", those records in error/sync will be updated to "Active Student – Status Unknown" since there will be no grade level submitted for those records. The cohort statuses of inactive students are updated based on School Exit Withdrawal Codes in SID Management and are not affected by State Submission.

10. Question: Is a "Status Unknown" student included in the Graduation Rate calculation?

Answer: Yes, if you have active students with "Status Unknown" statuses at the time that the graduation rate is calculated, they will be included in your Adjusted Cohort Count (i.e., in the denominator of the graduation rate calculation).

11. **NEW Question: How are students that are parentally placed in nonpublic schools (in order to receive special education services) considered in the graduation rate calculation?**

Answer: If student have been submitted to the most recent State Submission with the element NonPublic having a value of "REC" or "NREC," then they will be categorized as "Excluded from Cohort". If the students are active, then their cohort statuses will display as "NonPublic"; if the students are inactive (School Exit Withdrawal Code of "PPE"), then their cohort statuses will display as "PPE".

12. **NEW Question: Why is my district accountable for this student?**

Answer: If you are unsure about why your district is accountable for a given student, please refer to the *Accountable CDS Perspective One-Pager* on the Help tab and the corresponding list of New Jersey's *Accountable High Schools*. The Accountable CDS Perspective is derived based on students' CDS Codes as submitted by districts; please refer to NJ SMART's *Reporting Responsibilities* document to ensure that students' Attending, Receiving, and Resident CDS Codes are being reported correctly.